



Colossians: Jesus Over Everything

October 8 – Colossians 3:18-4:1

Section 1: Introduction

So much of Paul's focus in this letter to the citizens of Colossae is to help them separate truth from fiction (or worst, deception). This movement of Christianity was so different from anything Jews or Gentiles had heard that many people were having a hard time trying to make sense of all they were being taught.

Keep in mind there were a lot of different views on God, or gods, or worship, or lifestyles (this list could go on and on). Some people would have been very confident in what they believe, and others were just trying to create their own worldview from all they were hearing.

The passage this week focuses on responsibilities, submission, and respect; ideals that seem contradictory to the world today. We are led to believe we can live our lives prioritizing our personal desires without any emotional or spiritual baggage. Somehow, we have been led to believe that only focusing on ourselves will have no impact on relationships, marriage, friends, or work. There are consequences that come with our actions and God knows a better way to live; and God's ways are always better than our ways.

If we get our worldview from outside of Scripture, we are taught that marriage is "only a piece of paper," or that living together or having children outside of marriage is just as responsible as marriage. We are taught that employees can post irresponsible behaviors online and cry out for justice when terminated from work. We celebrate executives' extravagant lifestyles shown on our social media feeds while their employees work multiple jobs in unhealthy environments in order to care for their families.

Indianapolis, the United States, and the world sound a lot like Colossae and Paul's words could make a big difference for us, if we listened.

Read Colossians 3:18-4:1.

Section 2: Walk slowly through your passage.

- Read Colossians 3:18-21:
 - What words does Paul give to wives in this passage?
 - To husbands?
 - To children?
 - To fathers?
- Read Colossians 3:22-25.
 - According to Paul, what are slaves to obey their earthly masters in?
 - How are they supposed to go about their work?
- Read Colossians 4:1. Men are asked to make another major change. What is the command Paul gives to the "masters?" What is the reason for this command that Paul gives?
- Now read Ephesians 5:21-6:4. Consider the similarities between the Colossians passage and the Ephesians passage on families. What do you notice? Jot down your thoughts.

Section 3: Reflective Questions

- Does the idea of submitting to someone make you uncomfortable? Why? How does that translate to your idea of submitting to God?
- How does the idea of submitting to someone change when that person loves the way Paul describes in Ephesians 5:25-30?
- Verse 20 tells parents to not embitter their children. How can we raise children without discouraging them?
- Whether you are a husband, wife, child, or employee; do you display the same character when you are alone as you do when you are with others? If not, what needs to change in your life?
- How would your home change if all of Paul's directives were followed? What will you do to help your family live these ideals?

Section 4: Pray the Scriptures

Using Colossians 3:18-4:1, write out a prayer in response to what you've read or use the prayer already constructed below to pray this passage.

[Sample prayer]

(Scripture is clear regarding the sacredness of marriage, yet our culture has demoralized the institution of family. Part of our prayer is a confession regarding a cultural view of marriage & families.)

Father God, thank you for your love for me and my family. Thank you for marriage and how it reflects your love for your church, for couples living as one, for the love and respect of husbands and wives, and for mutual submission to one another in the same way they submit to you.

Lord, forgive us for treating marriage with less honor than you demand. For believing we can have the benefits of marriage without covenant relationships. How we believe absent fathers have no impact on children, children from divorced homes do not receive scars, that sex outside of marriage carries no emotional baggage, and that getting a divorce is as simple as a piece of paper. We have heavy burdens from all the lies we have fallen for; we beg for your forgiveness.

Give us an understanding of your truths that revolutionize how we think of families. Give us healthy community where we can date in such a way that honors you and prepares us for amazing marriages. Make us husbands and wives who pursue you above all else and sacrificially work together to live "as one" with each other. Make us parents who

invest in our children and teach them your ways in a way they feel known, valued, and loved.

God, your design for families is amazing; help us achieve what you desire. Help us seek you more than anything else. Keep us from being sidetracked from your desires.

In Jesus' name,
Amen

Section 5: Memorize Scripture

Throughout this series, we want to be memorizing Scripture. Use the prompts below to help you get Colossians 3:18-4:1 into your heart and mind.

- Write out the passage: Write down Colossians 3:18-4:1 in your journal or on a notecard.
- Memorize Colossians 3:18-4:1. Use various techniques to memorize the passage, such as repeating it out loud, creating visual associations, or setting it to a melody or rhythm, take time to commit these verses to memory.
- Review and practice: Regularly review the passage throughout the week. Recite it from memory and reflect on its meaning and significance.